**Article Draft: Systematising the Interdisciplinary Therapeutic Environment: A Supervisory Perspective.**

**Notes:**

* **need to improve the node and relationships diagrams to more comprehensively represent the relationships, add strength and directionality**
* **need to reformate whole document within a template**
* **need better material from complex systems theory**
* **need tighter tie in with material in thesis**
* **reduce references to Hawkins and Shohet and research/reference other models.**

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**Where I Stand**

As a contemplative, I interpret my experiences through the multiple lenses of western phenomenology and the eastern wisdom traditions ([Depraz, 1999b](#_ENREF_26); [Depraz, Varela, & Vermersch, 2000](#_ENREF_28), [2003](#_ENREF_29); [Genoud, 2009](#_ENREF_54); [Scharmer, 2000](#_ENREF_112); [Varela, 1999](#_ENREF_138); [Varela & Shear, 1999a](#_ENREF_139); [Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991](#_ENREF_140); [Vermersch, 1999](#_ENREF_141)). The ontologically fragile embodied self that I bring to my life and work[[1]](#footnote-1) as a practitioner, supervisee and supervisor is informed by these perspectives ([Buber, 1970](#_ENREF_12); [S Gallagher & Marcel, 1999](#_ENREF_38); [Shaun Gallagher & Shear, 1999](#_ENREF_39); [Shaun Gallagher & Varela, 2003](#_ENREF_40); [Hayward, 1999](#_ENREF_64); [Kircher & David, 2003](#_ENREF_75); [Pickering, 1999](#_ENREF_105); [Shear, 1999](#_ENREF_116); [Strawson, 1999](#_ENREF_127); [Tani, 1999](#_ENREF_128); [Zahavi & Parnas, 1999](#_ENREF_151)). Consequently I experience a strong resonance with reflective approaches to supervision, particularly ‘passionate supervision’ ([Shohet, 2007](#_ENREF_119); [Shohet, Adamson, & Wilmot, 2011](#_ENREF_121)).

I have also studied and trained in feminist psychoanalysis and Eugene Gendlin’s psychotherapy ([Gendlin, 1962](#_ENREF_44), [1978](#_ENREF_45), [1986](#_ENREF_46); [E. T Gendlin, 1992](#_ENREF_47); [Gendlin, 1996](#_ENREF_49), [1999](#_ENREF_50), [2000](#_ENREF_51), [2002](#_ENREF_52); [Gendlin & Johnson, 2004](#_ENREF_53); [Irigaray, 1974](#_ENREF_68), [1977](#_ENREF_69), [2002](#_ENREF_70); [Julia Kristeva, 1986](#_ENREF_77); [J Kristeva, 1991](#_ENREF_78)). This background affords me a deep appreciation and respect for the seven eyed model described by [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_62)).

Both the reflective approach and the psychotherapeutic model offer me congruence between self and work. In this ‘senior professional phase’ of my career ([Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011, p. 74](#_ENREF_124)), I am striving for a wholeness or fullness of self that will sustain me in my work ([Manthei, 2012](#_ENREF_84); [Maslow, 1954](#_ENREF_87); [McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2000](#_ENREF_89)) and, whilst honouring the ethical standards of my profession, also allow me an integrity, full acceptance and expression of that self within my work.

**Opening the Process of the Essay: Constructing the Supervision Mandala**

[Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_62)) provide a model for “the process of the supervisory relationship” ([2006, p. 81](#_ENREF_62)) which implies a structure through which to review the supervisory encounter. They claim that “The model is also useful in training supervisors to work with various elements of the supervision process, learning the refinements of each focus separately, so that they can then develop their own style and method of putting different processes together” ([2006, p. 84](#_ENREF_62)). A supervisee can use the model to identify the style of supervision they may require and request the balance of foci they will benefit from. [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_62)) do not claim to provide a model for the entirety of the supervision space. Many of the critiques of the model tend to assume that this is the case and this may be the danger of using the term ‘model’. Whether the model is critiqued for lacking integration or being hierarchical ([Matthews & Treacher, 2004](#_ENREF_88); [Tudor & Worrall, 2004](#_ENREF_131)), like myself, I would suggest that the reader is left with the felt sense “something is missing”.

The strength of the reflective approach to supervision is the attention paid to the actions and ‘states of self’ enlisted in supervision. Many of the actions that the reflective approach utilises involve complex processes: being present in the moment, providing a loving and trusting space, respecting the humanity of the parties involved, ensuring an openness to novelty, supporting social learning, life long learning and unlearning through experience, transformative learning and self evolution, the development of insight, attention to emotion, operating successfully within ambiguous environments, developing resilience, utilising feedback, demonstrating empathic resonance, creating change, working collaboratively, creating a reflective space, holding compassion, challenging assumptions and beliefs, using exploration, inquiry and facilitation, working holistically with mind, body and soul, developing a meta-consciousness, using unconventional interventions, enlisting sensitivity to difference and developing wisdom. The reflective approach aims to be empowering, supportive and freeing by engaging gratitude, connection, intimacy, deep communication, emptiness and forgiveness ([Adamson, 2011](#_ENREF_1); [Breene & Shohet, 2011](#_ENREF_10); [Carroll, 2011](#_ENREF_15); [Creaner, 2011](#_ENREF_19); [Driscoll, 2007](#_ENREF_32); [Hay, 2007](#_ENREF_63); [Heller & Gilkerson, 2009](#_ENREF_65); [Johns, 2004](#_ENREF_71); [Olivier, 2011](#_ENREF_97); [Rodgers & Shohet, 2011](#_ENREF_107); [Rowe, 2011](#_ENREF_109); [Scaife, 2010](#_ENREF_111); [Shohet, 2011](#_ENREF_120); [Wilmot, 2011](#_ENREF_148)) Despite these admirable qualities I am again left with the felt sense “something is missing”.

To attend to the absence I sense in the reflective approach I put it to the test. This essay represents my reflective self-supervision journey with the felt sense “something is missing” about both Hawkins and Shohet’s ([2006](#_ENREF_62)) model and the reflective approach to supervision. Through reflection I ‘develop my own style and method of putting different processes together’ by creating my own representation of the space in which supervision occurs or the supervision system. I conclude this journey in the final section of the essay by suggesting developments to the discipline of supervision and the reflective approach.

The diagrams presented throughout this essay represent a cumulative process towards constructing a mandala or yantra ([Huntington & Bangdel, 2004](#_ENREF_67); [Khanna, 1994](#_ENREF_73); [Mookerjee & Khanna, 1977](#_ENREF_94)) that portrays the ‘universe’ of the supervision space[[2]](#footnote-2). I build the mandala through a reflective engagement with [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_62)) model.

My goal is to create a model of supervision that can be applied at the microcosmic level of self-supervision and the macrocosmic level of group-supervision and the discipline summatively ([Casement, 1985](#_ENREF_16); [Gilbert, 2001](#_ENREF_56); [Gomersall, 2000](#_ENREF_57); [Langs, 1980](#_ENREF_79); [Littrell, Lee-Borden, & Lorenz, 1979](#_ENREF_80); [Yegdick, 1999](#_ENREF_149)). I attempt to honour this granularity within each of the aspects of the mandala.

As an interdisciplinary supervisor I am curious about whether it is possible to create a model of supervision that can provide a platform for interdisciplinary ([Pack, 2009](#_ENREF_101); [Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011](#_ENREF_124); [Van Ooijen, 2003](#_ENREF_134)) or interprofessional ([Beddoe & Howard, 2013](#_ENREF_7); [Cutcliffe, Butterworth, & Proctor, 2000](#_ENREF_21)) supervision. Disciplinary content and context are necessary components to supervision. Is it possible to create a model of supervision that has cross-disciplinary applicability by handling these components systematically[[3]](#footnote-3)? Practices and processes used within supervision could be systematically located and assessed against such a model.

**Relationships, Actions and Contexts**

The strength of Hawkins and Shohet’s ([2006](#_ENREF_62)) model is that it places relationship centre stage. Relationships, however, do not exist and cannot be defined in isolation. To identify all the aspects of the supervision space I turn to Greimasian semiotics and complex systems theory ([Cliff & Rocha, 2000](#_ENREF_17); [1987](#_ENREF_59); [Greimas & Courtés, 1979](#_ENREF_60); [Urdaneta, Hoyes, Bermeo, Villamil, & C, 2013](#_ENREF_132)).

Supervision can be characterised as a reactive system[[4]](#footnote-4). Reactive systems involve three main aspects: data complexity, behavioural complexity and communication complexity. In the case of supervision, relationships comprise the communication complexity, embodied actions[[5]](#footnote-5) ([Varela, et al., 1991](#_ENREF_140)), the behaviour complexity[[6]](#footnote-6) and contexts the data complexity. Each of these aspects of the supervision system are co-arising and co-creating[[7]](#footnote-7). Relationships, embodied actions and their contexts (or environments) are the axes that describe the supervision space. They represent three ‘separate orders’ ([Matthews & Treacher, 2004](#_ENREF_88)) within my description of the supervision system. My goal is to acknowledge the unique functions of the three axes whilst also ensuring they remain integrated through mutual determination and constraint ([Lutz, 2002](#_ENREF_81); [Varela, 1997](#_ENREF_137)).

From the perspective of graph theory ([Watts, 1999](#_ENREF_143), [2003](#_ENREF_144)), relationships have two main characteristics: strength, which can be represented numerically and direction, most commonly unidirectionality or bidirectionality[[8]](#footnote-8). Greimas ([1987](#_ENREF_59); [Greimas & Courtés, 1979](#_ENREF_60)) developed the semiotic square[[9]](#footnote-9) to provide an account of the three principle types of relationship conveyed through systems of meaning : opposition or contrariety, contradiction and implication or complementarity (see: Figure 1).

Figure 1: The semiotic square

Hawkins and Shohet’s ([2006](#_ENREF_62)) model involves seven modes, each representing a different aspect of the supervisory process. [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_5)) describe the first six modes as principally figural and the seventh mode as contextual. Their model of the supervisory process acknowledges the two relationship matrices: supervisor – supervisee and supervisee - client. In Greimasian terms these are usually relationships of complementarity. [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_5)) also describe the aspectualisation ([Martin & Ringham, 2006](#_ENREF_86)), or implied presence, of the client within the supervisor - supervisee matrix and the indirect relationship that exists between the client and the supervisor. In Greimasian terms this is a relationship of implication. The close attention the authors pay to the complexity of relationship and process in supervision is noteworthy. Throughout the body of this essay I consider each of the modes Hawkins and Shohet (2006) offer through the axes of relationship, action and context.

**Actions: Modes One and Two**

Mode One is described as the focus the supervisor brings to ensuring that the supervisee has fully grasped the client. This mode is particularly applicable to young practitioners who may be uncomfortable with the ambiguity and uncertainty of practice. The supervisor can encourage the client to “stay empty and unknowing, uncluttered by premature judgement, theory and interpretation” ([Hawkins & Shohet, 2006, p. 85](#_ENREF_62)), to ‘be’ with the client prior to engaging specific interventions. Mode One is an investigation by the supervisor of the supervisee’s observations of the client. As illustrated in Figure 2, the manner in which this mode is presented tends to suggest that the supervisor initiates the mode and focuses on identifying deficiencies in the supervisee’s perception of the client.

Figure 2: Unidirectional relationship between supervisor and supervisee

As a practitioner I find it useful to think of this ‘tuning in’ process in terms of my intero**cept**ive[[10]](#footnote-10) and extero**cept**ive per**cept**ion[[11]](#footnote-11), of the client, and myself in relationship with the client. Cept is a root term meaning ‘to grasp’. In my experience, it is more often the case that I, as practitioner, initiate Mode One and bring the supervisory modality to the process of grasping the client. This may be through the act of self-supervision ([Casement, 1985](#_ENREF_16); [Gilbert, 2001](#_ENREF_56); [Langs, 1980](#_ENREF_79); [Littrell, et al., 1979](#_ENREF_80)), which enables me as an independent learner ([Omand, 2010](#_ENREF_98)) or through standard or group supervision ([Cutcliffe, et al., 2000](#_ENREF_21); [Gomersall, 2000](#_ENREF_57); [Yegdick, 1999](#_ENREF_149)) in which I benefit from the social processes of learning ([Caroll, 2009](#_ENREF_14)).

Figure 3: Unidirectional relationship between practitioner and supervisee

When I notice an incongruity in what I have grasped about a client, or their impact on me, which I am unable to attend to or comprehend I bring the client to formal supervision. I consider the act of bringing a client to supervision to be my responsibility as a practitioner and an appropriately prepared supervisee ([Omand, 2010](#_ENREF_98)). In this gesture I move from the role of practitioner to the role of supervisee ([Depraz, et al., 2000](#_ENREF_28); [Scharmer, 2000](#_ENREF_112)) and only at that point does the client become visible to the supervisory matrix (see: Figure 3). In this manner, I retain ownership of my work ([Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011](#_ENREF_124)) and I exercise my power to choose supervision ([Beddoe, 2011](#_ENREF_6); [Beddoe & Howard, 2013](#_ENREF_7); [Bond & Holland, 2011](#_ENREF_9); [Brown & Bourne, 1995](#_ENREF_11); [Davys & Beddoe, 2010](#_ENREF_25); [Dolgoff, 2004](#_ENREF_31)). Rather than imposition or discipline, I experience supervision as empowering ([Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011](#_ENREF_124)). I illustrate this by introducing a unidirectional relationship from the supervisee to the supervisor.

Figure 4: Unidirectional relationship between supervisee and supervisor

The unidirectional relationships represented in Figures 2 and 4 sum to create a bidirectional relationship between these roles. This is represented with a two-directional arrow in the supervisory quadrant, illustrated in Figure 5.

Giving more presence to the role of the supervisee in our understanding of Mode One could provide a more balanced and cooperative presentation of this mode; one that gives presence to the power of the supervisee, is more accurate to the supervision process in practice and more applicable in interdisciplinary settings.

I do not intend to efface the role of the supervisor in Mode One. The process of ‘tuning in’ to and with the client is fundamentally important and the temptation to foreclose prematurely very real. By giving space to this moment in the therapeutic and supervisory process ([Varela, et al., 1991](#_ENREF_140)) [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_62)) have made an important contribution. I trust my supervisor to draw my attention to any absences in my observations they perceive, including omitting clients from discussion.

My goal here is to illustrate the movements that occur from the perspective of the practitioner/supervisee and to acknowledge the fact that the practitioner/supervisee is not transparent. The practitioner has the power to choose which clients they bring to light by stepping into the role of the supervisee.

As a practitioner, in Mode One, I am mainly engaged in observing the client and their impact on me. As a supervisee I am engaged in reflecting on my observations and observing my performance as a practitioner in this respect. I am responsible for reporting these observations to my supervisor, observing my supervisors perception of the client and myself as a practitioner from my report, observing and learning from my supervisors perceptions and potentially changing my perception of the client. Mode One does involve some isomorphism between the roles of practitioner and supervisee but these roles also involve very different requirements.

Throughout the supervision literature the differences between the roles of practitioner and supervisee tend to become conflated. I am curious about the implications of this conflation for our general understanding of the supervision space. For supervision in interdisciplinary contexts, for instance, being a supervisee is a role that can be shared across team members, whereas, the practitioner role is more often defined by the disciplines of the practitioners. Do we loose sight of important dimensions of supervision by collapsing these two roles into one?

As a supervisee, for instance, I am expected to integrate my learning in the supervision process into my identity as a practitioner. Conversely, as a supervised practitioner I am expected to recognise when I need to bring my practice to supervision. These are not automatic processes. Resistance ([Bond & Holland, 2011](#_ENREF_9)), fear and anxiety ([Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011](#_ENREF_124)) as well as satisfaction and growth arise in these movements and these movements are implied in and have consequences for all of the remaining relationships, contexts and actions present in the supervision space. The dialogue between supervisee and practitioner may be largely internal, however, this does not mean that it is entirely private ([Scharmer, 2000](#_ENREF_112)).

The role of the supervisee involves an unusual liminality positioned between the two poles of arrival: practitioner and supervisor ([Buber, 1970](#_ENREF_12)). The supervisee can either affirm or disrupt the self as competent practitioner. Being a supervisee involves a feminine receptivity towards the supervisor. In contrast, the role of the practitioner is one of masculine activity. I am reminded of Irigaray’s ([1977](#_ENREF_69)) description of ‘woman’ as the sex that is not ‘one’ and Kristeva’s ([1991](#_ENREF_78)) attention to the implications of becoming a stranger to aspects of the self. Although it goes beyond the scope of the present essay I believe it would be a worthwhile project to explore the dynamics of this internal relationship for both the practitioner and the supervisor. In self-supervision (an aspect of Hawkins and Shohet’s ([2006](#_ENREF_62)) Mode 6) the supervisor engages in the same internal dialogue with respect to their performance as a practitioner (in the role ‘supervisor’). To engage this dialogue they become their own supervisee.

Figure 5: The supervisory quadrant

I represent these dynamics in the supervision mandala by creating a diamond shape illustrated in Figure 5. The diamond embodies the presence of two equilateral triangles. The top triangle is reflected in the bottom triangle and vice versa. This is the ideogram that is used in *tukutuku* panels to represent the relationship between the masculine and the feminine principles. The masculine triangle sits on top of the feminine triangle because it is generated from the feminine and cannot exist without the feminine as its foundation. Consequently, the feminine is reflected in and constitutes the masculine[[12]](#footnote-12). I represent this co-creative relationship with a solid line.

A role is a set of prescribed embodied actions. The number of roles that define the *core* of the supervision space remains stable: client, practitioner, supervisee and supervisor. The definition and stability of these roles is generally defined in the client-practitioner contract and the supervisor-supervisee contract ([Butterfield, 2001](#_ENREF_13); [Caroll, 2009](#_ENREF_14); [Duncan et al., 2003](#_ENREF_33)). The number of individuals who take up these roles varies. In the case where a practitioner may momentarily need to be their own counsellor the same person may fill all of the roles. Alternatively, in group-supervision there may be multiple clients, practitioners, supervisees and supervisors.

I will argue for bidirectional rather than unidirectional relationships between each of the roles in the quadrant with an emergent relationship ([Varela, et al., 1991](#_ENREF_140)) between the supervisor and the client. It is these roles and relationships that set the supervision contexts and permit, define and constrain the actions that are appropriate within supervision.

Mode Two involves the supervisor in examining how and why the practitioner has chosen and made the interventions completed with the client. In this mode the supervisor examines the appropriateness of the interventions, evaluates the choices the practitioner has made and the range of interventions the practitioner has available to them. If, in the practitioner’s report of their practice, the supervisor observes dualistic thinking this is the mode in which the supervisor will encourage the practitioner to generate other options. Mode Two allows the supervisor a space in which to suggest their own interventions.

This mode is a shift from observing and interpreting the practitioner’s observations of the client (Mode One) to observing and interpreting the practitioner’s interpretations and actions with respect to the client. Again, the manner in which this mode is presented tends to suggest a unidirectional relationship. It is principally the supervisor who initiates these enquiries. The focus is on the supervisor’s role in identifying deficiencies in the practitioner’s actions and interventions with the client. Where is the agency of the practitioner/supervisee [[13]](#footnote-13) ([Coole, 2005](#_ENREF_18); [DeSocio, Kitzman, & Cole, 2003](#_ENREF_30); [Emirbayer & Mische, 1998](#_ENREF_34); [Gallese, 1999](#_ENREF_41); [Meyers, 1998](#_ENREF_93); [Roessler & Eilan, 2003](#_ENREF_108); [Segal, 1991](#_ENREF_114); [Sheets-Johnstone, 1999](#_ENREF_117); [Tsakiris & Haggard, 2005](#_ENREF_130))? What space does this give for the power of the supervisee or the collaborative power of both parties ([Brown & Bourne, 1995](#_ENREF_11))?

The same questions need asked with respect to the agency and power of the client within the supervisory space. The client may appear to be one relationship removed from the supervisor-supervisee matrix, however, one of the most important functions of supervision is to attend to the needs of the client. I represent the client’s power in the supervisory quadrant by using bidirectional relationships between the client and the practitioner, client and the supervisee and an emergent *bidirectional* relationship between the client and the supervisor.

As a supervisee, many of the most transformative experiences I have had have been learning experiences ([Caroll, 2009](#_ENREF_14); [Gilbert, 2001](#_ENREF_56); [Zorga, 2002](#_ENREF_152)). I have chosen to bring the client to supervision and asked my supervisor to explore with me the options for intervention. It is through the feedback process of discussing potential interventions, applying these interventions and observing changes in the client, reporting these changes to my supervisor, again refining and applying my interventions, observing changes and reporting back that deep learning has occurred. I have learnt new tools, refined existing tools and grown my sense of wisdom ([Owen, 2008](#_ENREF_99); [Smythe, MacCulloch, & Charmley, 2009](#_ENREF_125); [Varela, 1992](#_ENREF_135)).

Equally, as a supervisor, some of my most satisfying work has involved supporting a supervisee to engage in this kind of growth. If the supervisee does not engage their agency in this learning process, not only will this process be very draining for the supervisor and lead to limited forward movement for the supervisee and the client but the process is also likely to fail. A more accurate depiction of this mode could represent the active agency of the supervisee by making the relationship between these roles bidirectional. This would significantly reduce the grounds on which Hawkins and Shohet’s (2006) model, or any similar model can be criticised as being heirarchical ([Tudor & Worrall, 2004](#_ENREF_131)).

Although [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_5)) claim that their model is designed to elucidate the supervisory relationship I would suggest that Modes One and Two are more concerned with interoceptive and exteroceptive embodied actions. These actions occur within the client-practitioner matrix. They are being viewed from the perspective of the supervisor, through the supervisor - supervisee matrix. These modes, therefore, assume that the two supervisory matrices exist but the modes are not directly concerned with these relationships. The modes are concerned with the content that occurs within the relationships, the actions that occur within the context created by the relationships. This action-content is important territory to which supervision requires a rigorous approach.

**Relationships: Modes Three, Four and Five**

In Mode Three the supervisor examines the relationship or ‘system’ that the practitioner and the client create together, consciously and unconsciously. Vicariously, through the supervisee, the supervisor seeks out the client’s transference. The supervisor’s goal is to assist the practitioner to see the client-practitioner system from a perspective outside of the relationship so that the supervisee can become aware of the dynamics that emerge from the therapeutic relationship. In other words, this mode attends directly to the client-practitioner matrix.

Mode Four returns the supervisor’s focus to the interoceptive processes of the supervisee. The supervisor is concerned to seek out the practitioner’s exteroceptive counter-transference towards the client. In other words, the supervisor is assessing how the client is impacting on the practitioner and how the practitioner is responding to this impact. Although partially content-focused this mode is principally focused on the client-practitioner matrix from the other direction.

Mode Five attends directly to the supervisor-supervisee matrix and is relationship focused. It is similar to Mode Three in the sense that it focuses on the influence of the parties occupying the roles of client and practitioner. In this case, however, there are usually two clients in view: the supervisee and the supervisee’s client. The practitioner in Mode Five is the supervisor, who uses this mode to address any patterns or parallel processes, including those identified in Modes Three and Four, occurring between the clients and themselves.

As I have commented in relation to the first two modes, the presentation of these relationships tends to give limited agency to the client and the supervisee, who appear passive in the face of continuous assessment. The use of bidirectional relationships could balance these modes by acknowledging that all parties are active in observing and creating the relationships and supervisory actions concerned. This could also lead to a model of the supervision space that is less pathologically focused; one in which successful practice can be celebrated and the ability of all parties to contribute towards positive outcomes better acknowledged.

These modes most strongly reflect the disciplinary context that underpins Hawkins and Shohet’s ([2006](#_ENREF_62)) model due to the constitutive role they give to transference, counter-transference, mirroring and parallel processes. On the one hand these psychotherapeutic concepts have provided the authors with a framework through which to view the supervisory process. From a systemic perspective, however, transference, counter-transference, mirroring and parallel processes are not relationships, they are behavioral processes constituted by actions that occur across relationships. Such events emerge ([Varela, et al., 1991](#_ENREF_140)) out of the clusters of relationships that form within the supervision space ([Watts, 1999](#_ENREF_143), [2003](#_ENREF_144)). By distinguishing between the different axes of the supervisory space I believe it will be possible to view the relationships, actions and contexts and their interdependencies more clearly. It will also be possible to see how processes such as transference or counter-transference emerge from the supervisory space. In the next section I consider how the relationships and actions involved within the supervisory space create multiple contextual layers.

**Contexts: Mode Seven**

[Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_62)) acknowledge that the supervisory relationship exists within a context. They comment “Although the six modes of focus are inclusive in so far as they include all the processes within both the client and supervisory matrices, the supervisory and client relationships also exist within a wider context which impinges upon and colours the processes within it. The supervisor cannot afford to act as if the client-supervisee-supervisor threesome exists on an island without a context” ([2006, p. 84](#_ENREF_62)). Mode Seven provides their examination of context. [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_5)) describe Mode Seven as containing six sub-modes: 7.1, the context of the client, 7.2, the professional context of supervisees practice, 7.3, the context of the supervisee-client relationship, 7.4, the context of the supervisees ‘wider world’, 7.5, the context of the supervisory relationship and 7.6, the context of the supervisor.

I would argue that the contexts that are visited within and that define the supervisory space are constructed through the numerous relationships that enter into the supervision space: primarily the relationship matrices that construct the supervision quadrant and also those relationships that the actions of the parties introduce.

**Primary Contextual Level**

Supervision as a discipline is concerned with human experiences ([Eugene T Gendlin, 1992](#_ENREF_48); [Gendlin, 2000](#_ENREF_51), [2002](#_ENREF_52); [Gendlin & Johnson, 2004](#_ENREF_53)) and particularly how individuals and groups make meaning from those experiences ([Gendlin, 1962](#_ENREF_44); [Greimas, 1987](#_ENREF_59); [Schleifer, 1987](#_ENREF_113)). This ‘meaning making’ process contributes to the construction of the self which, each party brings to the supervisory process ([Atkins, 2005](#_ENREF_3); [Frank, 1993](#_ENREF_37); [S Gallagher & Marcel, 1999](#_ENREF_38); [McGann & De Jaegher, 2009](#_ENREF_91); [Pickering, 1999](#_ENREF_105)). In my model, the self of the individuals who occupy the roles of the supervisory quadrant, therefore, constitute the most primary contexts in my model of the supervision space. The act of acknowledging the foundational and constitutional role of the self to the entire supervision space presents supervision with the opportunity to choose frameworks for the understanding of the self (philosophical, scientific and cultural) that will most usefully inform and promote the goals of the discipline. The jewels within the supervision quadrant represent these ‘self contexts’.

As [Buber (1970](#_ENREF_12)) demonstrates *I* and *Thou* co-create and therefore the *I* always implies *Thou*. The primary contextual level acknowledges this constitutional intersubjectivity by understanding that the self is not entirely private ([Depraz & Cosmelli, 2003](#_ENREF_27); [Richardson, 2000](#_ENREF_106); [Scharmer, 2000](#_ENREF_112); [Zahavi, 2001](#_ENREF_150)). There is no equivalent to this contextual level in Hawkins and Shohet’s ([Hawkins & Shohet, 2006](#_ENREF_62)) modes.

**Secondary Contextual Level: Direct and Emergent Relationships**

In any moment of supervision, the relationships with objects[[14]](#footnote-14) and subjects[[15]](#footnote-15) that the quadrants selves engage, (whether they be physical, conceptual or lexical entities)[[16]](#footnote-16) move those objects and subjects into immediate relevance and therefore constitute the secondary level of context[[17]](#footnote-17) (see: Figure 6).

Figure 6: Primary and secondary contextual levels of a supervision quadrant role

It is through these relationships and the actions that occur within these relationships that the parties make sense of the experiences under consideration. Within the supervision mandala, I represent the objects and subjects of this secondary level of context with four fans, shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Primary and secondary contextual levels of the supervision mandala

An example from practice that demonstrates how this secondary level of context forms is discussed in Appendix A. In this example the practitioner observes a tension in the client that they do not understand. When they discuss this tension with the supervisor an emergent relationship between the supervisor and this conceptual object ‘tension’ is formed. A colleague has referred the client to the practitioner. The supervisor enquires about the referral and in so doing another emergent relationship forms between the supervisor and the subject, referring colleague. There are also direct relationships between the entities tension and referring colleague and the supervisee. These relationships and the direct relationships between the client, supervisee and supervisor are illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Direct and emergent relationships cluster

When there is a high density of relationship between entities this is referred to as a cluster ([Watts, 1999](#_ENREF_143), [2003](#_ENREF_144)). Clusters create the conditions for complex behaviours such as transference, counter-transference, and parallel processes to arise. Illustrated in Figure 9, I represent the direct relationships with solid lines and the emergent relationships of the secondary contextual level with broken lines to form a diamond that surrounds the first four fans.

Figure 9: Direct and emergent relationships mandala

The first circle within the mandala represents the sum of the entities and their relationships (see: Figure 10). Everything that lies within this circle belongs to the secondary contextual level, while the contents of the jewels, the individual selves, constitute the primary contextual level. This secondary level of context encompasses Hawkins and Shohet’s ([2006](#_ENREF_62)) sub-modes: 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.5 and 7.6.

Figure 10: Two-dimensional supervision mandala

**Tertiary Contextual Level**

Supervision has a temporal dimension. As the experiences of individual moments and sessions accrue over time the supervision context deepens. New subjects, objects and relationships present and form across multiple iterations of the supervisory process. Clients progress through therapeutic processes and present differently in later sessions than earlier in therapy. Practitioners see patterns and connections across multiple clients with similar issues. A supervisee experiences different supervisors and supervisory settings and these deepen their understanding of what supervision can be. Supervisors become more experienced at supervising. The second set of fans and the outermost diamond represent these temporal developments. They form the tertiary contextual level, represented in the mandala as the second circle (See: Figure 10).

**Quaternary Contextual Level**

The final circle represents the quaternary contextual level, the broader world context within which supervision occurs. This includes all aspects of the social and physical environment that all the parties concerned are connected to, in other words to which they are structurally coupled and with which they achieve operational closure[[18]](#footnote-18). Hawkins and Shohet’s ([2006](#_ENREF_62)) sub-mode 6.4 refers to an aspect of this contextual level. Seen through the lens of dependent origination this level includes all sentient beings. In the final analysis, like all other aspects of life, supervision’s broader influence includes the ability to touch this entire realm.

The space between the two outer circles represents a permeable membrane. This membrane determines the boundary between the outer world and the supervision space. It is a visual representation of how the supervision space is defined by specific entities within the earlier contexts: the needs of the client, the organisations concerned, the professional affiliations of the practitioners, the cultural, legal and ethical context of the supervision. It is also a reference to the spatial or physical dimension of supervision: the earth on which we live.

**Dimension**

Finally I reflect this mandala through a prism that includes four further dimensions: spatial (physical), thymic (emotional), cognitive and spiritual. This gives all aspects of the mandala dimensional depth. All of the actions, relationships and contexts of supervision involve all five dimensions. In Figure 11 these dimensions are represented as the layers in a cube. They refer also to the layers of the earth[[19]](#footnote-19).

Figure 11: Multi-dimensional supervision mandala

**Using the Mandala: Mode Six**

Mode Six is the last of the figural modes [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_62)) present. It asks the supervisor to examine how their direct relationship with the supervisee and their ‘fantasy’ relationship[[20]](#footnote-20) with the client impact on them. [Hawkins and Shohet (2006](#_ENREF_62)) comment: “Over the years, we have begun to trust these interruptions as being important messages from our unconscious receptors about what is happening both here and now in the room, and also out there in the work with the client” ([Hawkins & Shohet, 2006, p. 95](#_ENREF_62)).

Effectively this mode asks the supervisor to pay attention ([Csordas, 1993](#_ENREF_20); [Depraz, et al., 2003](#_ENREF_29); [Scharmer, 2000](#_ENREF_112)) to the images and reflections in each side of the jewel of the self and observe how they are affecting the jewel itself. This process requires astute awareness and a well-developed ability to reflect. Visualising each of the elements of the mandala through each dimension and their relationship to the jewel of the self could provide a supervisor with a means to comprehensively attend to all of the influences at play.

This mode also asks the supervisor to engage their capacity to self-supervise. By placing the self in each of the roles of the supervision quadrant the supervisor has a tool through which to self-supervise. The supervisor can ask: how am I sitting as a practitioner, a supervisee and a supervisor in the present supervisory context and are there any respects in which I am a client. In this manner we come full circle from the client to the supervision of the supervisor.

**Closing the Process of the Essay: Future Developments**

To conduct an initial assessment of my supervision model I completed a brief semiotic analysis of supervision literature from a wide variety of fields and topics. Appendix B contains a table that lists the actions, states and lexical objects identified. I did not come across any semiotic entities that did not fit within the framework of my model. What became immediately clear were the tremendous variety of actions, the large number of relationships and the complexity of the contexts within the supervision space. These actions culminate in complex supervisory processes, properties and conditions. Although all three axes are co-creative, I would argue that the differences that arise between different styles, functions and approaches to supervision mainly concern the action axis. The different organisational and disciplinary contexts that utilise supervision produce the complexity of the relationships and context axes.

The model developed here is an initial sketch which needs further development. I would also suggest that supervision as a discipline could benefit from ethically informed classifications for or taxonomies of the appropriate embodied actions, contexts and relationships that are appropriate to supervision. This may involve identifying those actions, relationships and contexts that need to be excluded from the supervision space and how this needs to be achieved using the boundaries to the contexts of supervision. These developments would be particularly useful for interdisciplinary supervision. They could clarify the definition of what supervision is (and is not) and provide guidelines for the content and use of supervision. A deeper application of complex systems theory and semiotics could progress these projects.

The variety of actions I have taken throughout the reflective journey of this essay and the depth to which they have enabled my journey is a testament to the reflective approach. Three absences within the reflective approach have crystalized along the journey.

The first concerns the definition of the act of reflection. Siegel defines reflexivity as “an immediate capacity of the mind to know itself, without effort, without conscious observation, without words” ([Siegel, 2007, p. 5](#_ENREF_122)) Reflexivity is only one aspect of reflection, yet many of the authors in this field conflate reflexivity and reflection. Reflection[[21]](#footnote-21) is also described as: paying attention, requiring honesty, being mindful, thinking rationally and critically, focusing on emotion, being perceptive, stepping back, posing the hard questions, purposeful focus, creating new understandings, mulling things over, reviewing, problem solving, inquiry, exercising reflective judgement, using imagination, observing, examining, reviewing, evaluating, assessing, interrogating, owning our thoughts, making sense, making meaning, strategic withdrawal, thinking deeply, facing vulnerability, resonating, surrendering, grace, authenticity, renewing, remembering and dreaming, ([Adamson, 2011](#_ENREF_1); [Atchley, Hall, Martinez, & Gilkerson, 2009](#_ENREF_2); [Breene & Shohet, 2011](#_ENREF_10); [Caroll, 2009](#_ENREF_14); [Carroll, 2011](#_ENREF_15); [Creaner, 2011](#_ENREF_19); [Cutcliffe, et al., 2000](#_ENREF_21); [Driscoll, 2007](#_ENREF_32); [Hay, 2007](#_ENREF_63); [Heller & Gilkerson, 2009](#_ENREF_65); [Johns, 2004](#_ENREF_71); [Kolb, 1984](#_ENREF_76); [Owen, 2008](#_ENREF_99); [Owen & Shohet, 2012](#_ENREF_100); [Rodgers & Shohet, 2011](#_ENREF_107); [Rowe, 2011](#_ENREF_109); [Ryde, 2011](#_ENREF_110); [Scaife, 2010](#_ENREF_111); [Shahmoon-Shanok, 2009](#_ENREF_115); [Shohet, et al., 2011](#_ENREF_121); [Wilmot, 2011](#_ENREF_148); [Zorga, 2002](#_ENREF_152)). Although reflection facilitates many of these gestures I would argue that none of them address the nature of the reflective act. A model that describes the act of reflection would be an important foundation for this field.

The second absence concerns a model for reflective supervision. Several models exist for the process of an individual reflective supervision session. [Atchley, et al. (2009](#_ENREF_2)) propose eight phases to the reflective supervision session: preparation, greeting and reconnecting, opening the dialogue and finding the agenda, telling the story and focusing on the details, understanding perspectives and generating hypotheses, considering next steps, closing and post-supervision reflection. They do not provide the means by which the supervisor can facilitate each of these phases.

[Davys and Beddoe (2009](#_ENREF_24)) offer a model for reflective learning that creates the following session structure: connecting at the beginning, setting the agenda, considering the events, exploring the impact and implications of the event,

1. The embodied ontologically fragile self is not static or permanent(Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991) but rather an emergent property of my active embodied engagement with the world, ‘virtual’ and in fragile flotation, continually evolving (Scharmer, 2008; Varela, 1999; Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. These diagrams are simultaneously strategies for reflection, objects for contemplation and instructional explicanda that reveal the relationships, actions and contexts, which constitute the supervision space. The diagrams are instruments through which I focus my attention on and organise my thoughts about the supervision space, to en-lighten the abode of supervision. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I use the term ‘systematically’ here to convey rigour and consistency but principally to refer to the supervisory system that I am modelling. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Wieringa (2003](#_ENREF_147)) defines the characteristics of a reactive system as follows:

“Reactive systems may exert control over their environment, but they also may provide information, facilitate behavior, prevent behavior, facilitate communication, and do many other things. The examples show that a continuous spectrum of types of reactive system exist that, to varying degrees, can be more or less complex along the following dimensions: data complexity, behavior complexity, communication complexity. Consequently, a reactive system designer may need specification and design techniques for all of these dimensions” ([Wieringa, 2003, p. 5](#_ENREF_147)). In the design of the supervision mandala I draw on the comparative analysis of entity-relationship diagrams offered by [Song, Evans, and Park (1995](#_ENREF_126)). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Embodied action refers to all forms of physical, emotional and cognitive actions. This concept is drawn from the enactive approach to cognition founded by Francisco Varela. In the following passage Varela’s describes how reason emerges out of the somatic and affective actions of the organism whilst in relationship to its environment. Spatiality, emotionality and cognition are three of five dimensions to the supervision space considered in this essay.

Reason is what occurs at the very last stage of the moment-to-moment emergence of mind. Mind is fundamentally something that arises out of the affective tonality, which is embedded in the body. It takes about a fraction of a second for the whole thing to happen, over and over and over again. In the process of a momentary arising of a mental state, the early stages are rooted in the sensory motor surfaces near the spinal cord in the mid-brain, then they sweep upward on to the so-called limbic system, into the so-called superior cortex, so this emotional tone changes transforming into categories and distinct elements and chains of reasoning, which are the classical unities description of mind. But reason and categories are literally the tips of the mountain which are sitting on affect, particularly affect and e-motion. In fact, e-motion is already intrinsically cognitive. Once you change your perspective and stop looking for reason as the most central principle of mind, then you can see the emergence of a moment of mind as it happens. It starts out from this soup, the entire organism in situation, and then it gives rise to this surge, which gradually spreads out like peaks of mountains. … That is why experience in a phenomenological footnote is so hard to articulate, since a large chunk of its base is pre-reflective, affective, non-conceptual, pre-noetic. It’s hard to put it into words, precisely because it precedes words. To say it precedes words does not mean it’s beyond words. It’s the opposite, it’s because it’s so grounded that it has not yet become the elements of reason that we tend to think are the highest expressions of mind ([Varela, 1996, p.78](#_ENREF_136)). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. To clarify the distinction between the pathway that is referred to above as communication complexity and the action of communication, which is referred to above as the behaviour complexity I would refer the reader to Hart’s explanation of communication as an intersubjective action: “In understanding the gesture of communication, be it in the form of speech or otherwise, the communicators’ intention is always to create the desired experience in the audience. Just as one creates and experiences one’s self as the communicator, one co-creates the ‘other’ as audience. It is this co-creative intention that shapes the communicative action. Communication, such as conversation as a form of communicative action, is an iterative process of achieving and refining shared conscious experience. A model for the intersubjective structure of communication is proposed in chapter 12” ([Hart, 2010, p. 129](#_ENREF_61)). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [Varela, et al. (1991, pp. 110-130](#_ENREF_140)) and [Payutto (1994](#_ENREF_103)) provide clear explanations of the concept of co-dependent arising. The former is more palatable to a western or scientific audience. The later provides a monastic and broader spiritual perspective. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For a rigourous example of the application of relationship strength and direction within therapeutic research see Hart (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For a detailed description of the semiotic square see Greimas and Courtés ([1979, pp.308-11](#_ENREF_60)). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. “Interoceptive doing designates actions that are *non-figurative*, that is, actions that take place inside the mind and relate to an internal world, such as thinking, remembering or feeling. The term can be contrasted with that of exteroceptive doing. This designates actions that are concrete and relate to the external physical world such as seeing, eating, jumping etc” ([Martin & Ringham, 2000, p.76](#_ENREF_85)). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For an account of how perception shapes mind, action, relationship, and environment from a relational complexity theory perspective see ([Kineman, 2013](#_ENREF_74)) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. I was gifted this understanding of the *tukutuku* panels by my Kaumatua, Te Hata Olsen of the Tu Hoe iwi. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. In Greimasian semiotics the term agent is defined as designating “the narrative role of a **subject of doing**, that is, of a subject engaged in the carrying out of a particular narrative programme. It contrasts with the term **patient** which designates a **subject of state**” ([Martin & Ringham, 2000, p.23](#_ENREF_85)). Greimas does not define agent or agency but provides the following definitions of the subjects of state and doing: “there correspond to the two types of elementary utterance (the utterance of state and being, and the utterance of doing) two types of subjects: the first type consists of **subjects of state**, characterized by a relationship of junction with objects of value … the second type consists or **subjects of doing**, defined by the relationship of transformation” ([Greimas & Courtés, 1979, p.321](#_ENREF_60)). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For a detailed definitions of the semiotic terms ‘object’, see [Greimas and Courtés (1979, p. 217](#_ENREF_60)) and ‘object of value’, see [Martin and Ringham (2006, p. 138](#_ENREF_86)). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Semiotic theory distinguishes between several different forms of subject. Martin and Ringham explain: “semiotics employs the term agent (or operating agent) to designate the narrative role of a **subject of doing**, that is, of a subject engaged in the carrying out of a particular narrative programme. It contrasts with the term **patient** which designates a **subject of state**” ([Martin & Ringham, 2000, p.23](#_ENREF_85)). Greimas and Courtés do not directly define agent or agency but provide the following definition of the subjects of state and doing: “consequently, there correspond to the two types of elementary utterance (the utterance of state and being, and the utterance of doing) two types of subjects: the first type consists of **subjects of state**, characterized by a relationship of junction with objects of value … the second type consists or **subjects of doing**, defined by the relationship of transformation” ([Greimas & Courtés, 1979, p.321](#_ENREF_60)). The use fot he terms ‘subject or doing’ and ‘subject of state’ have largely replaced the terms agent and patient. For a more extensive explanation of these terms see [Martin and Ringham (2006, pp. 192-193](#_ENREF_86)). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Complex systems theory treats subjects and objects as belonging to three classes of entities. [Wieringa (2003](#_ENREF_147)) explains: “Looking at various kinds of reactive systems, we find a wide variety of kinds of subject domains. To understand reactive system behaviour, it is useful to distinguish three kinds of entities that can occur in a subject domain: physical entities, such as devices and natural objects, including people, conceptual entities, such as organizations, promises, and holiday rights, lexical entities, such as contracts and specifications. This list is not exhaustive, nor are these kinds of entities disjoint” ([Wieringa, 2003, p. 14](#_ENREF_147)). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. In other words, it is the connection domain that determines the parameters of the subject domain, which is mapped to it and by it, and the relevance of the entities that exist within both domains. For definitions of subject and connection domain see [Wieringa (2003, pp. 11-22](#_ENREF_147)). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. For a relevant explanation of structural coupling and operational closure see chapter eight of *The Embodied Mind* ([Varela, et al., 1991, pp.147-184](#_ENREF_140)). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. I do not have the software required to represent these dimensions within a sphere. This would be an improvement. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Recent research revealing the existence of ‘mirror neurons’ strongly suggests that this kind of relationship is more than fantastical ([Damasio, 1994](#_ENREF_22); [Gallese, 2001](#_ENREF_42)). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The following passages are the most direct definitions of reflection I was able to find. They further illustrate this point. None of these passages describe what the act of reflection entails.

“Reflective practice is a collaborative relationship for professional growth that improves program quality and practice by cherishing strengths and partnering around vulnerabilities to generate growth.” ([Shahmoon-Shanok, 2009, p. 8](#_ENREF_115))

“Reflecting on an experience is an intentional learning activity requiring an ability to analyse the self in relation to what has happened or is happening and make judgements regarding this. However, what can pass for reflection might not be reflection; thinking about an experience or event is not always purposeful and does not necessarily lead to new ways of thinking or behaving” ([Driscoll, 2007, p. 29](#_ENREF_32)).

“Definitions of reflection are characterised as learning through experience toward gaining new insights or changed perceptions of self and practice. I describe reflection as being mindful of self, either within or after experience, as if a window through which the practitioner can view and focus self within the context of a particular experience, in order to confront, understand and move toward resolving contradiction between one’s vision and actual practice. From this description, the core characteristics of reflection can be elicited: practical wisdom, reflexivity, becoming mindful, commitment, contradiction, understanding and empowerment” ([Johns, 2004, p. 3](#_ENREF_71)). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)